

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claim 6 is currently being cancelled.

Claims 7, 9 and 12-14 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment and reply amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending and canceling the claims as set forth above, claims 7-19 are now pending in this application.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicant appreciates the indication in the Office Action that claims 15-17 and 19 are allowed, as well as the indication that claims 7, 8 and 18 contain allowable subject matter. By way of this amendment and reply, claim 7 has been placed in independent form to include the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, claim 7, as well as claims 8-14 and 18 which now depend from claim 7, are in allowable form.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 6, 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,883,844 to So in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,473,873 to Akamatsu et al. and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0049940 to Giaume et al.; claims 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over So, Akamatsu et al. and Giaume et al. as applied to claim 6, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,668,815 to Gittinger et al.; and claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over So, Akamatsu et al. and Giaume et al. as applied to claim 6, and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/100200 to Matshushita. Due to the cancellation of claim 6, and due to the amendments made to claims 9 and 12-14 such that presently pending

claims 9-14 depend either directly or indirectly from allowed claim 7, this rejection is now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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